REMARKS

The present amendment is submitted in response to the Final Office Action of November 21, 2001, which set a three-month period for response. Filed herewith is a Request for a Three-Month Extension of Time, making this amendment due by May 21, 2001.

Claims 1-16 are pending in this application. Claims 17-25 were previously withdrawn from consideration as a result of an election/restriction requirement.

Claims 1-16 stand finally rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,874,170 to Heine in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,958,532 to Krause, for the reasons set forth in Paper #4, page 3, paragraph #6.

In light of the Examiner's comments in the outstanding Office Action, the Applicant has amended claim 1 to more clearly distinguish the claimed invention from the cited combination of patents by adding language relating to the patentable distinctions presented in the amendment filed on September 5, 2000. Specifically, claim 1 now provides that the first connecting portion is connected to the second connecting portion for achieving a permanent connection between these two components, that the plasma treated connecting portion is chemically and morphologically altered in a micro area, and that an adhesion supporting intermediate component is not necessary for the adhesive connection.

As argued in the September 5, 2000 amendment, the present invention differs markedly from the cited references in that the surface of the poly fluorocarbon portion is both chemically and morphologically altered through plasma activation. On page 3,

lines 7-11 of the specification of the instant application, this feature is specifically discussed. The plasma treatment leads to a micro sandblasting effect, that is, to a plasma activation and/or to a chemical alteration in the micro area of the surface of the connecting portion 7 of the portion 6, 28. This plasma activated upper side of the connecting portion 7 provides with certainty that the portion 6, 28 is securely connected to the support member 1, without requiring an adhesion supporting intermediate component.

The Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1, as amended to more clearly set forth these distinctions, defines patentable limitations neither shown nor suggested by the combination of the Krause et al and Heine et al references.

Krause et al describes in column 2, lines 4-17, that through various microscopic techniques it is apparent that the physical structure of the substrate surface is not significantly altered through the corona or plasma treatment. To reiterate, amended claim 1 now specifically provides that the plasma treated surface in the micro area is chemically and morphologically altered. Thus, Krause et al specifically teaches away from the present invention as defined in amended claim 1.

As argued in the amendment of September 5, 2000, the patent to Heine et al has no similarities with the present invention. The essential difference between the present invention and this reference is provided in Heine et al, column 2, lines 48 through 54. There, it is provided that a substance-lock connection between the plastic material of the sealing member 4, 4' and the plastic material of the carrier body 2, 2' is obtained by adding a small quantity of the plastic material which comprises the carrier body to the

PTFE compound. This resulting connection is obtained from the fusing of the sealing member 4, 4' with the plastics of the carrier body 2, 2' by injection molding. In the specification of the instant application, such a method is already described and distinguished from the present invention. See, for example, page 2, lines 3 through 11. Thus, Heine et al also do not show or suggest the present invention as set forth in amended claim 1.

The Applicant submits further that the combination of Heine et al and Krause et al does not render the claimed invention obvious. Krause et al teaches the practitioner that when joining two components through corona or plasma treatment, the surface of the portions are not physically altered. Heine et al provides the practitioner only with the suggestion of connecting two portions together by using an intermediate component, which is mixable with the material of the carrier body 2, 2'. Even if the practitioner did combine Heine et al with Krause et al, the result would be a method of attaching two components through corona or plasma activation by using an intermediate adhesion support component, wherein the surface of the plasma treated portion is not physically changed. This result cannot be equated or compared to the present invention as defined in amended claim 1.

As amended claim 1 now distinctly provides, the surface of the plasma treated portion is chemically and morphologically altered and no intermediate adhesion support component is required to achieve the long-lasting connection between the components.

The Applicant therefore respectfully submits that claims 1-16 are not obvious over the cited combination of references to Heine et al and Krause et al. Further, the

Applicant requests withdrawal of the rejection of these claims under Section 103, entry of this amendment, and reconsideration of the claims as herein presented.

In light of the foregoing amendment and arguments in support of patentability, the Applicant respectfully requests that this application now stands in condition for allowance. Action to this end is courteously solicited. Should the Examiner have any further comments or suggestions, the undersigned would very much welcome a telephone call in order to discuss appropriate claim language that will place the application into condition for allowance.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Part 7 #9

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE:

1. A component comprising at least one support member (1) having a first connecting portion and at least one part (6, 28) having a second connecting portion (7), wherein said second connecting portion (7) is connected to said first connecting portion, wherein for achieving a permanent adhesive connection between at least said second connecting portion (7) and said first connecting portion, said second connecting portion of said at least one part (6, 28) is comprised of poly fluorocarbon, wherein at least said second connecting portion (7) is activated by plasma treatment for connecting said at least one support member (1) and said at least one part (6, 28), wherein said plasma treated connecting portion (7) is chemically and morphologically altered in a micro area, and wherein an adhesion supporting intermediate component is not necessary for an adhesive connection.